

ZBA members,

Thank you so much for listening to the citizens of Walpole this evening. I realize that you have some very difficult decisions to make regarding this 40B project proposed by David Hale and Omni.

I am writing to ask that you NOT grant a waiver regarding the height of the 6 story apartment buildings. I feel the buildings should be absolutely no more than 4 stories. This project has been proposed under the pretense of adding affordable housing to our town - I feel strongly that these massive buildings, in particular, are not necessary in meeting this goal. With a small percentage of units being rented as "affordable" - cutting down a few stories from these apartment buildings should not be considered as negatively impacting the concept of 40B and affordable housing. And, given the low price the applicant paid for the land purchased, cutting a few stories off the buildings should not detract significantly from Omni/David Hale's profit. I think you should absolutely request that the buildings be reduced to 4 stories, and then challenge the profitability with a pro forma. The best you can do for this town is challenge this project, even if you fail.

I feel that denying the height waiver is absolutely justified. There are many safety issues that will be created by this project. 5-6 story buildings will create an extreme challenge for the fire dept in regard to staffing (letter to the ZBA dated 2/2/21). This is a town-wide concern, and should be a high priority issue. We have all seen and heard about Tetra Tech's report, stating that the project will have a significant impact on off-site automobile and pedestrian traffic. We know that the added traffic and pedestrian volume will significantly impact the safety of the South Walpole Common, Summer St, Winter Street - this safety concern impacts the people currently living in South Walpole, and will also affect the residents moving into the complex. Their safety is also at risk.

This is a quaint area of town - small and with a charming character, its infrastructure does not support a development of this size. The thin, winding roads, the small town common - this is not an appropriate neighborhood for the placement of a giant development such as the one proposed by Omni. We should not allow the project to change the character of the neighborhood, rather the project should be designed to fit the character of the community.

Thank you again for the time and effort you continue to put into this issue. And thank you for the compassion you have shown for this South Walpole neighborhood.

Sincerely,  
Sharon McCarthy